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## Detroit physician's mentoring work goes into new regional education center

By Jay Greene

Mohammed Arsiwala, an internist who runs a chain of urgent care clinics in Detroit and is on the board of the **Michigan State Medical Society**, has been mentoring high school students for more than 10 years.

During that period — in which he's had students spend nearly three hours in physician offices each school day for up to 10 weeks — more than half of Arsiwala's 30 students have become doctors. Most of the other students are pursuing careers in the medical field, including biomedical engineering.

"The students have to maintain a certain GPA and have an inclination to work in sciences and medicine," said Arsiwala. "When they are here, we talk the students about medicine and they see patients with us. It is a great experience for them, and it has a great impact on their career."

By 2020, the U.S. is looking at a shortage of 66,000 primary care doctors nationwide, including 6,000 in Michigan, said the **U.S. Department for Health and Human Services** and the **Michigan Department of Community Health**.

Students mentored by Arsiwala, who runs the Livonia-based **Michigan Urgent Care Centers**, rotate through his clinics in Livonia, Canton Township, Novi, Dundee and four in Detroit.

Now Arsiwala has a chance to expand his health care mentoring program sixfold through the **Michigan Area Health Education Center**, a program intended, in part, to encourage underprivileged K-12 students to go into medicine.

In 2010, **Wayne State University** received a two-year, \$900,000 grant from the **U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration** to develop the first of two training centers in Detroit and central Michigan. Three other regional centers will be developed to cover the state's 82 counties.

This year the Michigan Area Health Education Center received a \$750,000, three-year grant from the **Kresge Foundation** with Wayne State chipping in an additional \$400,000 and another \$300,000 coming from the medical, nursing, pharmacy social work and dentistry schools, said Linda Tarjeft, associate program director of the Michigan Area Health Center's **Southeast Regional Center**.

"All five schools have pulled together," Tarjeft said.

The Southeast Regional Center is housed at the **Detroit Wayne County Health Authority** and will cover Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Washtenaw, Lapeer, St. Clair, Genesee and Monroe counties.

**Central Michigan University** is working with Wayne State to help develop a health education center to service 19 mid-central Michigan counties.

As co-chair of the Southeast Regional Center pipeline outreach and enrichment committee, Arsiwala is developing a set of guidelines to improve communication with school districts on mentoring programs.

The other co-chair of the committee is Mark Burley, director of the Lansing-based **Michigan Health Council**, a nonprofit that connects health care employers with potential workers and promotes health education.

Arsiwala said the pipeline committee's primary goals are to identify the types of mentoring programs that can be designed at the elementary, middle and high school

levels; encourage minority participation in the internship programs; develop a website that will give educators information on mentoring programs; and promote mentoring activities within the schools.

"We want to work with the schools to help the students develop an interest in health care," Arsiwala said.

Tarjeft said Michigan is somewhat behind other states in developing health care workforce programs because it was the last state to receive federal funding.

"We are all working very hard to get up and running with the entire program. It will take another six to seven months to identify the needs in the communities," Tarjeft said.

Besides working to encourage students to pursue health careers, Tarjeft said the health education center will work with health care professionals to provide a variety of support and continuing education services.

"We know retention of health professionals is very important," Tarjeft said. "We will work with the federally qualified health centers and clinics to find out their needs and then go to the colleges or schools to find students who want to work in those areas."

For more information, visit [www.miahec.wayne.edu](http://www.miahec.wayne.edu).

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